



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front St. (Hwy M-72)
Empire, Michigan 49630-9797

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 20, 2005

L1617(SLBE)

Dear Friends:

The National Park Service (NPS) has begun the process of planning a large stabilization and rehabilitation project and associated Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Port Oneida Rural Historic District (District) in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The purpose of the Project/EA is to explore the various ways in which the NPS might stabilize and rehabilitate historic structures and landscapes in the District, while enhancing visitor access to interpretive and recreational opportunities.

The District is representative of the late 19th and early 20th century farms of the Midwest. The 18 farms, 113 structures, and 3,400 acres constitute one of the largest intact agricultural districts in the National Park System. Because of its size, integrity, and potential for preservation, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places at the State level of significance and has been suggested as potentially being of national significance by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. We have provided a map of the District on the reverse side of this letter that will help orient you to this resource.

The District provides an excellent opportunity to preserve a rapidly disappearing landscape associated with an important time period in the heartland of America. The potential exists for Lakeshore visitors to explore this American farm landscape for both educational and recreational activities.

While the NPS intends to preserve all of the historic structures and landscapes, a select number could be rehabilitated to be adaptively used by partners or by the NPS for operations. Recreational and educational opportunities could be provided by adaptively using one or more buildings as visitor use facilities such as contact stations and restrooms, developing a designated trail system and parking areas, and/or providing a system of wayside exhibits (interpretive panels) and signage for visitors who might tour the District by vehicle, bicycle, or on foot. Safety hazards from deteriorating structures would also be eliminated.

The Project/EA process is just beginning and we welcome your ideas on the future of the District. Specifically, we would like your ideas on how to best preserve the structures and landscapes and provide opportunities to understand and enjoy them. We also need your ideas on what impacts and issues we should consider as we plan how to achieve these goals. We request that you provide your comments to us by October 21, 2005. The comments you submit during this "scoping" phase of planning will be incorporated into a range of alternatives and impact analyses in the EA. The EA will then be made available for further public review and comment, scheduled for release this winter, and we will again solicit your input. Comments may be mailed to the Lakeshore at the above address or emailed to SLBE_EA@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Dusty Shultz
Superintendent

Enclosure



Port Oneida Rural Historic District

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore



LEGEND

